

PREFACE

At some time or other in the life of every healthy young person there appears to be developed what has been styled "the collecting mania." Whether this tendency is due to the natural acquisitiveness of the human race, to an innate appreciation of the beautiful and the curious, or to the development of an instinct such as is possessed by the bower-bird, the magpie, and the crow, which have the curious habit of gathering together and storing away trifles which are bright and attractive to the eye, ¹ leave to students of the mind to decide. The fact is patent that there is no village without its youthful enthusiast whose collection of postage-stamps is dear to his heart, and no town in which there are not amateur geologists, archaeologists, botanists, and zoologists, who are eagerly bent upon the formation of collections of such objects as possess an attraction for them.

One of the commonest pursuits of boyhood is the formation of a collection of insects. The career of almost every naturalist of renown has been marked in its early stages by a propensity to collect these lower, yet most interesting and instructive, forms of animal life. Among the insects, because of their beauty, butterflies have always held a foremost place in the regard of the amateur collector. For the lack, however, of suitable instruction in the art of preserving specimens, and, above all, by reason of the almost entire lack of a convenient and well-illustrated manual, enabling the collector to identify, name, and properly classify the collections which he is making, much of the labor expended in this direction in the United States and Canada fails to accomplish more than the furnishing of temporary recreation. It is otherwise in Europe. Manuals, comprehensive in scope, and richly adorned with illustrations of the